

SHIFTING FRONTIERS IN ANCIENT THEORIES OF METAPHOR

This paper is concerned with one little-known but intriguing and conceptually promising episode in the history of Greek thought about metaphor. Remarks made by two distinguished scholars will help us to get some preliminary bearings. In ancient discussions of rhetoric, says D.A. Russell, there was ‘a sharp distinction between content (*to legomenon*) and verbal form (*lexis*). With some hazy and uncertain exceptions, ancient writers on poetry also adhered firmly to this distinction’¹. Qualifications are added later in the book; but Russell leaves us with the clear impression that no Greek or Roman theorist made significant concessions to any nonsense about the medium being the message; and that whatever may be true of isolated examples of critical practice, all general theories about the elements of poetry assumed that discussions of *what* is said can be conducted quite independently of discussions of *how* it is said. In so far as connections were envisaged at all, Russell maintains, it was in terms of a rather vague notion of ‘suitability’: many writers cite with approval the Gorgian slogan, ‘great words suit great things’².

Nearly fifty years earlier, W.B. Stanford had made a similar point about metaphor in particular. The starting-point for almost all substantial Greek discussions of the subject is provided by the accounts given by Aristotle in his *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*, and especially, on Stanford’s view, by the brief definition at *Poetics* 1457b, μεταφορὰ δὲ ἐστὶν ὀνόματος ἀλλοτρίου ἐπιφορὰ, ‘metaphor consists in applying to a thing a word that belongs to something else’ (Stanford’s translation). After some pages of discussion, he comments: ‘Aristotle’s definition never suggests that the ἀλλότριον ὄνομα adds its share of τὸ ξένον to the *meaning* as well as the *diction* of its context’³. Metaphor is regarded, almost everywhere in the theoretical tradition, as a subject falling wholly within the domain of λέξις.

Stanford identified just one exception to this rule, in the writings of Hermogenes of Tarsus, a rhetorician of the second century A.D. What Stanford calls Hermogenes’ ‘vision of the true faith’ is expressed as follows. τροπή ἐστὶ τὸ μὴ ἐξ ὑποκειμένου πράγματος ἀλλοτρίου δὲ σημαντικὸν ὄνομα θεῖναι, κοινὸν εἶναι δυνάμενον καὶ τοῦ ὑποκειμένου καὶ τοῦ ἔξωθεν ἐμφαινομένου, ὃ καλεῖται καὶ μεταφορὰ παρὰ τοῖς γοαρματικοῖς.⁴ Stanford argues that this constitutes a ‘significant challenge’ to

¹ D.A. Russell, *Criticism in antiquity* (London 1981) 4.

² Ibid. 6, 130; compare DK 82A1.

³ W.B. Stanford, *Greek metaphor: studies in theory and practice* (Oxford 1936) 18.

⁴ See L. Spengel, *Rhetores graeci* (Leipzig 1853–6), II 254.

received views, and that Hermogenes, ‘by insisting on the effect of metaphor on *meaning* and not merely on diction, expresses its unique force in language’ (p. 18).

Now Stanford’s own view of metaphor is that its ‘unique power’ is ‘just that of meaning two things at once’; and he finds in Hermogenes an important anticipation of his own position. This is not the place to debate the credentials of Stanford’s analysis of metaphor in its own right, though many more recent writers would dispute it.⁵ But his claim that it is implicit in Hermogenes’ remarks certainly needs to be questioned. The text’s one direct reference to ‘meaning’ or ‘significance’, contained in the single word *σημαντικόν*, is evidently too slight to carry the weight of such an interpretation. The interpretation seems to depend, in fact, on elements of Stanford’s translation which (I suggest) are wholly unjustified.

His version runs as follows. ‘It is Oblique Language when a term not relevant to the subject matter but signifying some extraneous object of reference is introduced into a sentence so as to unite in its significance both the subject at issue and the extraneous object of reference in a composite concept; this is also called Metaphor by the grammarians’ (p. 14). Some of the looseness in this translation is harmless; but some of it matters. Hermogenes does not say that a term used metaphorically ‘unites in its significance’ the two objects, merely (and much more vaguely) that it can belong to them jointly. He certainly says nothing about its uniting them ‘in a composite concept’, a phrase that corresponds to nothing in the Greek whatever. Once these accretions have been removed, I can find nothing in the text to encourage Stanford’s reading of it as a ‘significant challenge’ to traditional views, ‘insisting’ that the replacement of a direct description by a metaphor involves changes in meaning as well as in diction. As far as I can see it says nothing about these issues at all, and provides no evidence for the existence in Hermogenes’ time of any account of metaphor which departs in substantive ways from Aristotle’s.

There is, however, another theorist, not usually noted for his originality, who might have offered Stanford and Russell much more substantial traces of a challenge to the Aristotelian tradition; but they seem to have overlooked him. At the simplest level, this theorist is unimpressed by the notion, implicit in Russell’s ‘Gorgian slogan’, that a given kind of action or event has some straightforwardly identifiable property, greatness or whatever, for which the poet must seek ‘suitable’ expression. Similar actions may quite properly be represented, on his view, in sharply contrasting ways on different occasions and for different purposes. Secondly, we find in this author,

⁵ This will be obvious to anyone who browses, for instance, through the papers delivered at a Chicago symposium in 1978, and collected in S. Sacks (ed.), *On metaphor* (Chicago and London 1979). The presuppositions of views such as Stanford’s are most explicitly challenged in Donald Davidson’s ‘What metaphors mean’ (Sacks 29–45). Davidson’s arguments are vigorously criticized by other contributors; but their essays will also help to undermine the illusion (if any still remains, sixty years after Stanford and twenty years after the Chicago symposium) that Stanford’s simple formulations are adequate to their task. See particularly Paul Ricoeur, ‘The metaphorical process as cognition, imagination and feeling’ (Sacks 141–57), Nelson Goodman, ‘Metaphor as moonlighting’ (175–80).

Aristides Quintilianus, a way of dividing up the territory of literary analysis which relocates familiar topics in quite unfamiliar parts of the terrain, and in so doing radically disrupts the old division between content and diction, thought and its expression. The main business of this paper is to explore the very interesting account he presents. But I also have a historical hypothesis to offer. I shall argue that the original formulation of Aristides' account must be due to the Stoics, and that we are justified in perceiving here the footprints of a full-scale Stoic theory of metaphor.

Let us first articulate a little more fully the outlines of the 'mainstream' position. The distinction between thought or meaning, usually *διάνοια*, on the one hand, and its verbal 'dress', diction, *λέξις* on the other, goes back at least to Plato.⁶ It receives its classic formulation in Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*, and as Stanford and Russell suggest, it is clearly the Aristotelian accounts of *dianoia* and *lexis* which underlie the rather repetitious theoretical enunciations of the later tradition. Aristotle's own presentation of these topics leaves us in no doubt that he conceived them as quite distinct. Thus in the *Rhetoric*, after completing his account of *διάνοια*, the sense and strategy of a speech, he explains that the study of *λέξις* is not genuinely intrinsic to the subject at all, only an appendage made necessary by the *μοχθηρία* of the audience (3.1.5); and he describes it as *ἅπαντα φαντασία ... καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἀκροατὴν* (3.1.6). In the *Poetics* he is very brief about *διάνοια*, on the grounds (1456a32 ff.) that it has been adequately explored in the *Rhetoric*, but goes on (as indeed he does in the *Rhetoric* too) to discuss *λέξις* in some detail.

Λέξις, we are told (1450b12 ff.) is the expression, *ἐρμηνεία*, of a thought, through words, *διὰ τῆς ὀνομασίας*. The 'parts' of *λέξις* are *στοιχεῖον*, *συλλαβή*, *σύνδεσμος*, *ὄνομα*, *ῥῆμα*, *ἄρθρον*, *πτῶσις* and *λόγος*, each of which is briefly characterized (1456b19 ff.); but it rapidly becomes clear that his main interest is in *ὀνόματα*. These are classified under various headings. An *ὄνομα* may be *κύριον* – that is, the normal designation proper, in the relevant language, to the thing referred to – or a *γλῶττα* – a foreign or dialect borrowing – or a *μεταφορά* or a *κόσμος*; or it may be *πεποιημένον* or *ἐκτεταμένον* or *ὑψηλημένον* or *ἐξηλλαγμένον*.

The point to which I want to draw attention is the presence in this list of *μεταφορά*. The subject is pursued at some length; and both here and in the *Rhetoric* a *μεταφορά* is treated unambiguously as a kind of *ὄνομα*. Hence discussions of it fall squarely under the heading of *λέξις*; and so they do too, as Stanford complained, in most of the other Greek literary theorists. The consequence is that a metaphorical allusion to a thing differs only in its verbal form from a reference that uses the normal, non-metaphorical name for it, its *κύριον ὄνομα*. A metaphorical expression changes the *sense* of what is said no more than does the replacement of the *κύριον ὄνομα* by an equivalent foreign or dialect expression, a *γλῶττα*. It is, quite precisely, a figure of *speech*, a special way of transmitting to an audience the same thought that the *κύριον ὄνομα* would convey.

⁶ Particularly *Rep.* 392c–98b.

The only point of using a metaphor is that sometimes, for a particular audience, it enables the thought to be conveyed more vividly and effectively. The thought itself is conceived as being prior to and essentially independent of the chosen form of expression, whether the latter is figurative or *κύριον*.⁷

It is here that Aristides Quintilianus departs most strikingly from the familiar tradition. His account comes in Book 2 of the *De musica*, written perhaps in the third century A.D.⁸ In setting off to discuss the details of how μουσική can be used in ethical education, he begins with what looks like a routine list, plainly Platonic in its ancestry: the elements to which the poetic educator must attend are ἔννοια, λέξις, ἁρμονία and ὀυθμός (65.23–4). Our expectation that ἔννοια (which we naturally read as something like ‘conception’) will stand on a different level from the others, as that which is to be expressed is prior to the choice of means for its expression, is immediately reinforced, when he tells us that ἔννοια is in all respects the leader, προαθηγείται – another clear echo of the same Platonic passage. He subsequently devotes one long chapter (ch. 9), and parts of the chapters before and after it, to ἔννοιαι, and emphatically marks the beginning of ch. 11 as a start on the quite different topic of λέξις (ἁρμονία and ὀυθμός get their own discussions later). He includes a lengthy disquisition on figures of speech – metaphors, similes, synecdoches, ἀλληγοροίαι, and various others. That all sounds commonplace enough. The surprise is that this disquisition falls wholly and quite explicitly under the heading, not of λέξις, but of ἔννοια. There is no question of this being due to the author’s inattention or an accidental jumbling of the text. His handling of the figures is tied carefully and closely into his general account of ἔννοιαι, and the boundary between this discussion and that of λέξις is, as I have said, quite emphatically indicated. For Aristides, it would seem, these figures have ceased to be figures of *speech* and have become, instead, figures of *thought*.

This (perhaps alarmingly epigrammatic) way of putting the point should of course not be taken to imply that words are irrelevant to metaphor, in Aristides’ understanding of the matter. Metaphors and related figures, like direct descriptions, are inevitably expressed in words, and cannot be detached from their verbal formulations. Hence any attempt to discuss them will refer, *inter alia*, to words; any attempt to exemplify them

⁷ In making these statements I follow what I think is the usual interpretation of Aristotle: but I am not wholly convinced that it does him justice. It is true that his discussions of the effects of metaphors focus principally on their capacity to make ideas vivid, or to give pleasure to an audience, and that they do little to suggest that what a metaphor conveys differs in *meaning* from what is conveyed by a corresponding literal statement. But there are certain passages, notably *Rhet.* 3.2.13, which may indicate a stronger and more interesting view. That passage certainly deserves close scrutiny. For present purposes, however, we may put it aside, on the grounds that its implications (if indeed it has any) about the power of metaphor to affect meaning are both thoroughly obscure and uncharacteristic of Aristotle’s overall approach; and it seems clear that they failed to make any impact on the dominant strand of the later tradition.

⁸ For the text, see Winnington-Ingram’s Teubner edition (Leipzig 1963). There is a translation in my *Greek musical writings*, vol. 2 (Cambridge 1989), which I believe to be preferable to that offered in T.J. Mathiesen, *Aristides Quintilianus: On music in three books* (New Haven and London 1983). Mathiesen’s introduction can usefully be consulted, however, on issues surrounding the question of the work’s date and intellectual milieu.

will present the examples as sequences of words; and any attempt to examine their meanings and associations will amount to an examination of the meanings and associations of the words in which the metaphors are expressed. Aristides' treatment is no exception. Direct references to words, and to the special effects created by their indirect uses are abundant in the relevant pages of his text. It is words, in certain passages at least, which are said to have the psychological influence which metaphors and other figures are designed, according to Aristides, to exercise. It is 'harsh words' that affect our attitude to Ares and Aphrodite (70.21–2), 'words that trouble the mind' which convey a particular impression of Achilles' laments (71.14–15), 'bright words' that direct our feelings about the death of Euphorbus (71.20); and so on.

None of this is in dispute. The position I am attributing to Aristides can most simply be characterized through its contrast with that of Aristotle. By subsuming metaphor under the category of λέξις, Aristotle and his followers implicitly deny that the substitution of a metaphor for a direct description affects the meaning of what is said; it alters only the verbal form. Aristides' treatment of it under the heading of ἔννοιαι, which as I have said is deliberate and systematic, points at the very least to a modification of that position. It suggests that the difference between a literal and a metaphorical expression is, or at any rate includes, a difference between the ἔννοιαι, the 'conceptions' of the thing described which the different verbal expressions convey. Thus although Aristides sometimes writes, in what I take to be a perfectly intelligible shorthand, of the psychological effects of 'harsh words', 'solemn words', and so forth, he also describes them, more elaborately, as the effects, not of words as such, but of what is signified by the words (τὰ σημαινόμενα, as e.g. at 70.11, 71.2). Different ways of referring to the same thing (70.20–1) have different effects on their hearers because they present different conceptions of it; they have different *meanings*.⁹

Perhaps the clearest indication of Aristides' position comes at 69.1–8, where he introduces the mode of education with which he is currently concerned, and lists the various figures that are useful for providing it. (I shall not consider every nuance of the passage here; we shall return to it later.) He describes it as παιδεύσις ἐκ τῶν ἐννοιῶν, education 'from', or 'on the basis of', or even 'constructed out of' conceptions. The resources used for 'influencing the soul' (ψυχαγωγία) in the procedures he is examining are evidently quite different from those involved in manipulations of λέξις (75.14 ff.), which exploit only the effects of the shapes and sounds of the words themselves. His concern at 69.1 ff. is strictly with the semantic aspect of language, and with words in their guise as vehicles of meaning. What the educator is looking for are

⁹ I do not mean to argue that Aristides is working here with a fully developed distinction between 'sense' and 'reference', as articulated by Frege; but I *do* mean that any philosophically adequate analysis of his strategy would find it useful to deploy a distinction of just that sort. The theoretical paraphernalia on which (I believe) he consciously builds, and which I examine below, can fairly be said to have affinities with Frege's. But it is certainly not identical with it; and readers who persevere to the end of this paper may be inclined to judge that the Fregean analysis would have served Aristides' purposes better than did the Stoic apparatus on which, as I argue, he actually drew.

ways of representing a subject that will ‘influence the soul’ appropriately; and he does so by his choice of ἔννοια suitable for the purpose.

The technique of education ἐκ τῶν ἐννοιῶν, Aristides goes on, has two forms. ‘If one can find the things signified (τὰ σημαίνόμενα) that are useful for influencing the soul among (or ‘from’) the underlying material of the things in question (ἐκ τῆς ὑποκειμένης τῶν πραγμάτων ὕλης), we shall use them; but if we are at a loss, we shall track down the necessary σημαίνόμενα by indirect means (μεθόδοις)’ (69.2–5); and these μέθοδοι turn out to be such things as metaphors, similes, circumlocutions and so forth (69.5–8). It is evidently assumed that there is some definite set of subjects about which the educator has views to convey, the πράγματα or ‘things in question’. Whether he speaks literally or metaphorically, then, his utterances will in some sense be ‘about’ those things. If that were not so, he would never need metaphors at all; in order to convey the σημαίνόμενα he has in mind, he could simply change the subject and talk about πράγματα among whose ‘underlying material’ those σημαίνόμενα could straightforwardly be found. Thus the ‘things in question’, those to which the descriptions refer, must be the same whether the descriptions are literal or indirect. In that case, plainly, the relevant difference between a direct and a figurative description is not in the thing referred to. Nor is it in the words employed, though there will of course be differences there. It is in the ‘things signified’ by the words, the meanings attached to them; and since the (quasi-Fregean) *reference* of each description is the same, this must mean that the different forms of description offer conceptually different presentations of the same object. In the case of metaphors and other figurative forms, the object is presented through the filter, as it were, of an ἔννοια (or a σημαίνόμενον) which is directly descriptive only of something else. While the reference of the description remains the same, its meaning and hence its ‘psychagogic’ effects are transformed.

Thus the central distinction between the two forms of education mentioned in this passage is not at the level of verbal expression but at the level of what is signified, and of the way in which that signification is related to the object which is being described. We might guess (though this goes beyond the text) that the undeniable difference in verbal form, which is inevitably involved as well, is to be construed as a secondary *consequence* of the difference in meaning. What metaphor essentially involves is a transfer of meaning from one domain to another. The words are selected only as convenient devices through which that transference can be achieved.

If Aristides’ approach involves, as it apparently does, a rather radical shift from the familiar Aristotelian treatment of metaphor, there are several not unpersuasive ways in which the development might be justified; but I shall not try to articulate them yet. Aristides himself gives no justifications, or not directly. In order to see what he is up to, we shall need to work through parts of his text in a little detail.

When the notion of an ἔννοια is introduced in 2.7, as that from which the poet–composer begins his process of construction, one might suppose that an ἔννοια is the idea *of* something, the idea representing the poet’s choice of subject-matter –

love, for instance, or the story of Oedipus. But this is not Aristides' focus. The original question, for him, is not what subject to present, but, given a subject, *how* to present it; and specifically whether to present it in a favourable or unfavourable light. This gives us a first key point. An ἔννοια, in the relevant parts of Aristides' text, is never a purely descriptive, value-neutral conception of some subject, but always involves the representation of its subject in accordance with some evaluative attitude. The ἔννοια, he says, is in all respects the leader, *because* without it there will be no choice or rejection, αἵρεσις or φυγή, of anything at all (65.24–6).¹⁰

The bulk of the next chapter, ch. 8, is devoted to an account of the origins of evaluative attitudes, and an explanation of why they differ from one person to another. It sets out from an elaborate little essay on the soul, the second of three substantial passages (chs. 2, 8, 17) in which Aristides unravels his engaging and sometimes bizarre doctrines on this topic. For present purposes the essential ideas of ch. 8 can be simply stated. While the soul inhabits the distant upper regions, it consorts only with reason and is free from desire (ἐπιθυμία). But when its curiosity leads it to become attracted to things in this world, it needs and seeks a body. But again, all bodies – indeed all natural things – are characterized by one or the other of a pair of contrary qualities, maleness and femaleness, or by some mixture of the two. In coming to occupy a body, the soul acquires an affinity with this body's gendered character; and this makes its generalized desires specific. It comes to love, value and admire things of either the male or the female kind, or things whose gendered qualities are mixed in proportions corresponding to those of its own body; and it thereby acquires characteristically male, female or mixed dispositions and emotional tendencies.

The subject we are interested in now resurfaces (67.15). Since people are constituted with these natural differences, there are differences also in their ἔννοιαι. Aristides offers some simple examples: some people like bright colours, others dark; some enjoy sweet flavours, others sharp or bitter ones – these being instances, as he goes on to explain, of the male–female polarity in different qualitative domains.

Why do these differences in people's tastes count as examples of differing 'conceptions', ἔννοιαι? It is not that in our conceptions of the same thing we privilege different observable parts or properties of it. The objects to which the ἔννοιαι mentioned here relate are not complex, concrete things like frogs or buttercups – where a buttercup might be conceived alternatively as a golden flower, a tussock of green leaves, a plant that multiplies itself by stem-rooting, a plant with a bitter flavour. The

¹⁰ The claim that an ἔννοια is 'never' value-neutral may be a marginal – but only a marginal – exaggeration. In the chapters with which we are concerned, the word occurs seven times (65.23, 25; 67.16; 68.14; 69.1; 70.18; 72.7). The last two, taken in isolation, might not unreasonably be construed as referring to 'conceptions' without any implication that they are evaluatively loaded. None of the others can plausibly be interpreted in that way; neither can an earlier occurrence at 57.4. About the remaining three appearances of the word in other parts of Aristides' text (56.25, 76.29, 85.21) no clear decision is possible. Evaluative implications are quite plainly attached also to the two occurrences (68.19, 73.7) of the related word ἐννόημα, of which I shall say more below.

objects are simple qualities like brightness or sweetness, devoid of observable complexity. Aristides' point must be that these qualities do not by themselves determine any particular evaluative response; in encountering them we encounter things that are in themselves neither good nor bad. Nevertheless we do respond to them as delightful or as unpleasant; and since the objects remain the same while the response is variable, the response must be determined not by the things themselves, but by our idea of them, the manner in which we conceive them. Our perceptual experience of the things is not innocent and direct; it is filtered through the *ἐννοιαί* we already have of such things, and it is the quality of these *ἐννοιαί* that crucially affects our response. In envisaging brightness, yellowness or whatever, we include in our conception an evaluative loading contributed by ourselves; so that one person, conceiving the colour yellow, has *in* his conception the notions of cheerfulness and light, while another, in conceiving the same colour, presents to himself the image of something bilious and disgusting.

One can begin to see here, in an embryonic way, a reason for assimilating such things as metaphors to the category of conceptions, *ἐννοιαί*, rather than that of *λέξεις*, diction. We may refer metaphorically to a buttercup either as a golden bowl, for instance, or as the gardener's enemy. The difference between these designations, and between them and the κύριον ὄνομα 'buttercup', is not in the object referred to; nor is the relevant difference merely in the audible, visible or grammatical forms of the words used to refer to it. It lies rather in the *ἐννοιαί*, the evaluative conceptions, which, in referring to the buttercup, the metaphorical phrases simultaneously awaken. By enticing our audience to conceive the thing referred to through the 'filter' of the evaluative conceptions aroused by the metaphorical image, we manipulate their evaluative attitude to the thing itself. The difference between the effects of referring to a buttercup in two different ways is due neither to the words as such, nor to any change in the object referred to, but to some conceptual *tertium quid* interposed between the two.

In Aristides' discussions of these matters, the word *ἐννοια* is used in conjunction with a number of other rather tricky terms. If we are to understand the former, we shall certainly have to do something to elucidate its relations with the others, and their various roles in Aristides' account of literary imagery. We must start by looking rather closely at a passage at the beginning of 2.9, which apparently sets out to account for the fact that we commonly respond to things not just by noticing them, but with acts of approval or assent, here called *συγκαταθέσεις*.

πρώτη μὲν οὖν ἡ δι' ἐννοιῶν ἐν βίῳ συγκατάθεσις ἢ εὐτυχῶς ἕκαστα δι' αὐτομαθείας κατειληφόντων ἢ ὕστερον μεταπεισθέντων· αἱ γὰρ τῶν πολλῶν διαβοήσεις ἥθος ἐμποιεῖν <οὐχ ἦττον> ἢ αἱ τῶν ἐπιστημῶν δόξαι πεφύκασιν· πάντων γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴ τύπους ἐν ἑαυτῇ καὶ εἰκόνας ἔχουσα τοῖς ὑπὸ τῶν λόγων κινουμένοις ἐννοήμασιν ἐκάστοτε συσχηματίζεται, κατὰ ἐκ τῆς τοιαύτης συνηθείας τε καὶ μελέτης ἔλαθεν ἢ εὐδαίμονα κατὰ μικρὸν ἔξιν ἢ ἐναντίαν βεβαιώσασα.

Our initial approval (συγκατάθεσις) of things in life arises, then, through conceptions (ἔννοιαι), which have either grasped individual things successfully through our own inherent capacity to learn, or have later been persuaded to change. Here the chatterings of the many have as much power to instill character (ἦθος) as have the doctrines of the sciences. For the soul has in itself impressions (τύποι) and images (εἰκόνες) of everything, and it constantly remodels them in the light of ἐννοήματα that are stirred up by speech; and then, as a result of this sort of familiarity and practice, it imperceptibly and gradually establishes a fixed disposition (ἔξις), which may be a blessing or a curse. (2.9, 68.14–22)

This is a crucial paragraph, but it leaves the status of some of the central concepts employed, and the relations between them, in certain respects unclear. The first claim is that our συγκατάθεσις, our psychological acts of approval or assent, arise through ἔννοιαι. This now seems straightforward; it is because of our value-loaded conceptions of things that we respond to the things themselves with approval or rejection when we meet them. These ἔννοιαι may arise δι' αὐτομαθείας – an obscure expression, but indicating, I think, the way in which we independently learn to recognize affinities between things we meet and our original, natural constitution; or they may be conceptions that have been altered from their original form by external suasion. In explaining this assertion Aristides makes the incidental point that even αἱ τῶν πολλῶν διαβοήσεις, the chatterings of the many, can implant ἦθος; and since what he is talking about here are the origins of ἔννοιαι, this suggests that ἦθος and ἔννοιαι are at least very closely linked, if not identical. Our ἦθη, our evaluative dispositions, are reflected in or even constituted by our ἔννοιαι, and change in one ensures or amounts to change in the other. And now Aristides explains this claim in its turn. ἦθος can be affected by other people's talk, because the soul contains τύποι and εἰκόνες of everything, which it constantly remodels through the ἐννοήματα that λόγοι arouse. Then if ἦθος is represented in or even constituted by the ἔννοιαι, are these perhaps identical also with the τύποι and εἰκόνες contained in the soul? If so, they are apparently *not* identical with the items named by the new term, ἐννοήματα. The ἐννοήματα are not the same as the impressions and images embedded in the soul, but are *instrumental* in the remoulding of them; they seem to be intermediaries of some sort between people's utterances (which will include, of course, the deliberately educative poetic utterances with which Aristides is concerned) and the psychological effects they are capable of producing.

It rather looks, then, as if in these two related terms, ἔννοια and ἐννόημα, we have references to items of two different sorts, performing distinct roles in the linguistic and conceptual transactions that Aristides is discussing. The evidence we have looked at so far would suggest that ἔννοιαι, being closely associated or even identical with ἦθη, and with images and impressions internal to the soul, are *psychological* states or entities, the soul's 'conceivings', as it were, rather than independently or abstractly subsisting 'concepts' which the soul envisages or grasps. As to ἐννοήματα, we have

as yet insufficient information to decide. We need to look at Aristides' handling of both terms in other parts of his text.

ἔννοιαι are mentioned frequently in our passage, and occasionally elsewhere in Book 2. Some of the occurrences give no real help with the present problem. Others, however, seem at least on balance to confirm the diagnosis I have just suggested, that ἔννοιαι are psychological states, entities or conditions, actually existing in the soul, as modifications or aspects of it. Thus at 57.4, we are told that in μουσική what imitates the ἦθη and πάθη involved in real actions are the ψυχῆς ἔννοιαι, and it is plainly more natural to locate these episodes of imitation in the soul's acts or states of conceiving than in separately existing concepts which it contemplates. Another clear case is at 67.15–16, where Aristides claims that differences in people's ἔννοιαι are explained by the fact that the soul's nature is different in different people. τούτων οὖν ἑκάστῳ κατὰ φύσιν διαφόρως ὑποκειμένων καὶ τῶν ἐννοιῶν γίνονται διαφοραί. Nothing has been said to suggest that different souls envisage different concepts, or to explain why they should; and it is again more plausible to treat different ἔννοιαι as different psychological conditions or orientations, which have indeed been accounted for in the preceding discussion. Finally, in 70.19 ff. he anatomizes the way in which a certain Homeric expression (*Il.* 20.59–60) is well designed to lead us εἰς ἔννοιαν of the confusion he wishes to convey. By itself the phrase εἰς ἔννοιαν might mean 'to a concept of ...' But the passage as a whole is concerned with techniques of ψυχαγωγία, ways of altering psychic conditions. It would not be to the point to say that the line *expresses a concept* well. The idea must be that it changes our psychological state, leading us into that of *conceiving* a situation of chaotic turmoil.

But there are other elements in play here too. At 69.1–2, in a passage that we have already briefly examined, Aristides characterizes the poet/musician's art as that of παίδευσις ἐκ τῶν ἐννοιῶν, and says that there are two species of it. It will be recalled that in one of them, when searching for the σημαίνόμενα that are suitable for use in influencing the soul, the poet discovers them ἐκ τῆς ὑποκειμένης τῶν πραγμάτων ὕλης. In the other, we are to track down what is necessary by indirect routes, μέθοδοι, that is, through metaphors, similes, synecdoches and the rest. Here the word ὕλη cannot be working precisely in its technical, Aristotelian sense; what Aristides presumably means is that in some cases we can describe the thing, with appropriate psychological effect, by referring to it plainly and directly, in terms that identify it simply as what it *is*; while in other cases an indirect form of reference is required. Direct reference is to be made, I suppose, through what Aristotle calls the κύρια ὀνόματα, while the indirect approach, as we have seen, involves 'figures of speech' – though that is evidently no longer the appropriate expression – of one sort or another.

The really interesting word here is σημαίνόμενα, 'things signified'. Sometimes we find the right ones not 'in', but ἐκ, 'out of', 'from among', τῆς ὑποκειμένης ὕλης. In other cases we must track down the ones that are necessary, ἀναγκαῖα, by indirect routes. It is obvious that the σημαίνόμενον cannot be the sign or word as such; it is something signified, not the signifier. But equally, in neither case is the σημαίνόμενον

identical with the thing to which reference is made. In one form of reference it is said to be something ‘extracted from’ the thing. In the other it is apparently what is ‘signified’ by a metaphor or the like; and the kinds of figure that Aristides goes on to discuss need not literally pick out any real entities in the world at all. But it seems clear in any case, as I argued earlier, that the very same thing might be referred to in either way, directly or by μέθοδοι, and that in such circumstances the σημαίνόμενα will not be the same, even though the thing referred to is.

Aristides seems to be talking, at least roughly, about what the Stoics called λεκτά, that is, about what utterances *mean*. In Stoic metaphysics these items have a curious status. Unlike both the utterance itself and that of which it is true (if it is true), the λεκτόν is not a body, nor even a condition of one. Specifically, it is not the body referred to by an utterance, nor is it a psychological condition of the person making the utterance. My thought or impression *is* a psychological state or disposition of mine; but the λεκτόν *is that which I envisage or assent to* while in that state. It is the *meaning* of the utterance in which I might express my thought; and this meaning, which could be thought of by anyone, is not an aspect of me. No more is it the thing I refer to or an aspect of it – for a number of reasons, but most obviously because there may *be* no thing corresponding to the sense of my utterance. It is worth pointing out that Aristides’ word, σημαίνόμενον, is used of these non-corporeal, non-psychological somethings in at least one of our important sources for Stoic theory; Sextus Empiricus uses it consistently throughout his passage on Stoic semantics. Only at the end of his treatment is the more usual bit of jargon, λεκτόν, introduced; and here λεκτόν and σημαίνόμενον are explicitly said to be the same.¹¹

Two other passages in Aristides also suggest that his σημαίνόμενα have some such role as this. The first is 70.10–11. Here we are told that in Homer’s line

κυάνεαι σάκεσίν τε καὶ ἔγχεσι πεφρικνύϊαι (Il. 4.282)

what he could not have done on the basis of the ‘natural’ terms, ἐκ τῶν κατὰ φύσιν ὀνομάτων, he achieves vividly διὰ τῶν μεταφορικῶς σημαινομένων. It is not through words alone and as such, but through σημαίνόμενα, here things signified through metaphor, that psychological effects are produced. Words are important, obviously. In the present case, we are told, the ‘word’ (ὄνομα) φρίκη displays the agony of war. But it does so διὰ τό φοβερόν. This ‘fearfulness’ is the middle term linking the word and the effect; and it is neither a quality of the word in question, πεφρικνύϊαι, conceived merely as an articulate sound, nor the condition directly

¹¹ Adv. math. 8.11–12. One might argue with some justice that Sextus is scarcely to be trusted on the delicacies of terminology. His testimony is worth recording none the less. It shows, if no more, that the identification between σημαίνόμενον and λεκτόν could be made, in a Stoic context, at this date; and since nothing in Sextus’ critique hangs on the terminological point, there is no reason why it cannot have been made also, or even originated, within the Stoic camp.

referred to by that word, the ‘spikiness’ of the serried ranks of spearmen. It is something different, neither the word nor its referent, an affective meaning or signification through whose special colouring an object or state of affairs is conceived and represented. Only through such an intermediary can the word generate in the soul a particular emotional attitude to its referent.

Secondly, a little later on, Aristides is discussing the devices through which Homer represents two events of the same sort in different evaluative lights. He points to words such as ἐμίγησαν, λάθρη, ἦσχυνε in the account of Ares going to bed with Aphrodite (*Od.* 8.268–9), contrasting them with the σεμνὰ ῥήματα of the line about Odysseus and Penelope, ἀσπάσιοι λέκτροιο παλαιοῦ θεσμὸν ἴκοντο (*Od.* 23.296). He goes on, at 71.1–3, speaking of the verses in which Agamemnon says that he has never made love to Briseis (*Il.* 9.133–4), to describe this as a case of οὔτε μεμπτῆς κατὰ νόμον οὔτε ἐπαινουμένης ὁμιλίας, intercourse that is customarily neither blamed nor praised, and comments that Homer achieves the effect of this μεσότης, intermediacy, by ‘an interweaving of the oppositeness of the things signified’, συμπλοκῇ τῆς τῶν σημαιομένων ἐναντιότητος. He seems to be alluding to the conjunction here of the word μυγῆναι in line 133, treated earlier as negative in its force, with θέμις, which is plainly positive, in the next line. Once again it is not a difference in reference that gives ἐναντιότης, nor anything in some mind. The σημαινόμενα are evaluatively loaded concepts that *mediate between* the minds of the audience and the things to which their attention is directed.

In Aristides, then, as in Sextus’ account of Stoic semantics, σημαινόμενα are not the items referred to by words, and neither are they psychological states. They are ‘significations’ available equally to the poet and his audience, and cannot therefore be identical with any item essentially located in some particular mind. If then the ἔννοιαι are states of mind, they are not identical with the σημαινόμενα.

Now the σημαινόμενα are evidently very important; it is they that can be ‘useful’ or ‘necessary’ for ψυχαγωγία. They do the work. But they are mentioned under this title only three times in Aristides’ long discussion. Are they then to be identified with anything else that he mentions? The passage we looked at earlier, which included references to συγκαταθέσεις, ἔννοιαι, ἥθη, τύποι, εἰκόνες, ἐννοήματα and ἔξεις – a whole barrage of semi-technical notions – seems to contain only one plausible candidate: ἐννοήματα. All the others are either quite evidently conditions, acts, states or dispositions of the soul, or else – in the case of τύποι and εἰκόνες, are explicitly said to be contained in it. This is not said of ἐννοήματα. What *is* said is that they are aroused, κινούμενα, by utterances, λόγοι, and that they are instrumental in reshaping the τύποι and εἰκόνες contained in the soul. They appear, then, to have a place *between* the utterances, the spoken or written signs, and the psychological entities in a person which are affected when he reads or listens to speech. It seems a very fair guess that these intermediaries are meanings, and in Aristides, specifically meanings loaded with affective weight. Only the meanings of words can provide the right sort of link between the utterance and its effect. Perhaps, then, σημαινόμενα and ἐννοήματα are the same

things viewed from opposite angles; on the one hand as what is signified by the words, on the other as what is envisaged by a mind when the words are uttered.

ἐννοήματα resurface explicitly in a later passage, at the beginning of ch. 10 (73.7). By now Aristides has completed his account of metaphors, periphrases, ἀλληγορίαι and the like, the μέθοδοι I touched on earlier. Each has been briefly characterized, and their uses and effects exemplified from the works of Homer. Now he says: ‘When these ἐννοήματα are interwoven with one another (πλεκομένων ἀλλήλοις), there arise λόγοι and their species’; and he goes on: ‘Those (ἐννοήματα) which lead to relaxation and cheerfulness give birth to simple and charming λόγος, while those which stir up thought and impulse display the λόγος that is political and competitive (ἀγωνιστικός)’. Here, as often, Aristides’ discussion is moving from smaller elements to the larger constructions that are built up out of them, and the species into which these fall. In this case the larger constructions are λόγοι; yet their components are certainly not *words*, or groups of words – the term ἐννόημα plainly precludes that. Nor, equally obviously, are they the psychological conditions aroused by words, or the material objects to which the words refer. They are, nevertheless, what the preceding discussion of metaphors and so on has been about; and we are again driven back on the suggestion that they are something like ‘meanings’, σημαίνόμενα, grouped into types according to the affective load they carry. That indeed was Aristides’ main focus when discussing examples of figurative expression in Homer; the figures are there to convey such things as the charm of dawn, the fearfulness of war, the shameful of adultery. The task of these figures is to present an object or action effectively in a certain emotional or evaluative light. It does this not through its words, simply as such, but through the affective associations of their meanings. Hence classes of such figures can be referred to as classes of meanings, σημαίνόμενα, or concepts, ἐννοήματα.

Now ἐννόημα is another technical term in Stoic philosophy; but in Stoicism ἐννοήματα are apparently not identical with λεκτά and σημαίνόμενα. The latter, λεκτά and σημαίνόμενα, are standardly, I think, the meanings of utterances, the sense of what is said – in the case of statements their propositional content; whereas ἐννοήματα are more like concepts, corresponding at least roughly to what modern philosophers would call ‘universals’. There is an associated ontological distinction. While λεκτά and σημαίνόμενα, though not real bodily things, are at least assigned the status of ἀσώματα, incorporeals, ἐννοήματα are denied even that amount of reality. They are neither σώματα nor ἀσώματα, says Alexander; they are φαντάσματα ψυχῆς or φαντάσματα διανοίας, according to Stobaeus’ report of Zeno, and Diogenes Laertius, and are neither τινα nor ποῖα, whatever exactly that means.¹² I do not pretend to understand all this;¹³ and fortunately we do not need to, for present

¹² Alexander, *In Ar. Top.* 359.12–16; Stobaeus 1.136.21–137.6; Diogenes Laertius 7.60–1. See passages 30D, 30A and 30C respectively in A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic philosophers* (Cambridge 1987).

¹³ But substantial help is given by Long and Sedley’s notes, op. cit. I 181–3, II 181–5; see also the passages they cite on the subject of λεκτά, and their discussion of the subject, I 195–202, II 196–204.

purposes. What is clear is that the Stoics intended a distinction between *σημαινόμενα* and *ἐννοήματα*, and that this extended both to their semantic roles and to their ontological status. The difference between their roles, at least seems tolerably unproblematic. If I am right about Aristides, however, he treats these terms as interchangeable; they indicate only different aspects of the same things, meanings, regardless of whether they are the meanings of sentences or the concepts that correspond to individual expressions. On the other hand they clearly belong, even in Stoicism, to the same general area of thought; they both exist – if that is the right word (and it clearly is not) – in a metaphysical limbo between words and things, and between words and the psychological conditions that their reception and comprehension produces. Both are, in a broad sense, meanings.

Turning back briefly to the subject of *ἐννοιαί*, it is clear that they too belong squarely in the Stoic repertoire, and in a role very close to that in which Aristides uses them – that is, as psychological states of ‘conceiving’. According to the Stoics, as in Aristides, impressions of external things are received through the *ἐννοιαί* with which the mind is equipped; and just as for Aristides these *ἐννοιαί* may arise δι’ αὐτομαθείας or as the result of external persuasion and remodelling, so the Stoics distinguish between *ἐννοιαί* that are ‘natural’ and those that are culturally or idiosyncratically constructed.¹⁴

Aristides has taken the topic ‘figures of speech’, which was regularly located in literary theory within the field of diction, *λέξεις*, and has transformed it into the topic ‘figures of thought’, whose investigation is concerned with the quite different and explicitly distinguished domain of conceivings and concepts, *ἐννοιαί* and *ἐννοήματα*. What I am suggesting is that this unusual and interesting transference is achieved through a moderately systematic and moderately faithful deployment of a collection of Stoic terms and distinctions. The key terms are *ἐννοιαί*, *σημαινόμενον* and *ἐννόημα*. As further Stoic borrowings we can certainly add *συγκατάθεσις*, and probably also *τύπος*;¹⁵ perhaps also *ἥθος* and *ἔξις*, though these are of course in much more general currency. The only point at which Aristides’ usage, on my interpretation, is plainly at odds with that of the Stoics is over an issue so recondite and philosophically specialized that the slip is eminently understandable.¹⁶ Aristides, after all, does not write as a Stoic;

¹⁴ See for example Aetius 4.11.1–4, and other passages collected in Long and Sedley’s Section 39, with their discussion.

¹⁵ It is used here, I think, in just the right manner and context for a Stoic discussion. See in particular Diogenes Laertius 10.33 (Long and Sedley 17E).

¹⁶ One consequence of the peculiar ontological status assigned by Stoics to *ἐννοήματα*, (and that assigned to *λεξτά* too, though there the metaphysical issues are slightly less problematic) is that they are incapable of entering into causal relationships. As the *PCPS* reader pointed out to me, this entails that they cannot act upon anything, and hence – it would seem – cannot produce changes in anyone’s soul. Hence no one and nothing can (apparently) be affected or altered by the meaning of anything that is said. Rather obviously, this is a conclusion that Stoics who sought to understand the power of language could not embrace without further discussion; the difficulty had to be circumvented, and the route around it was always likely to be complicated. But the fact that Aristides’ account passes these problems by without the least acknowledgement is to be construed, I suggest, merely as a symptom of his lack of interest in refined ontological subtleties, rather than as a proof that the whole theory must after all be alien to Stoicism.

his predilections, for the most part, are for a sort of advanced neo-Pythagoreanism bordering on rudimentary Neoplatonism. Nor is he trying to expound or analyse Stoic doctrine, only to make his own modest use of its resources.¹⁷

I have also suggested that the decision to transfer the study of metaphors and other such figures from the domain of λέξις to that of ἔννοια is not a wanton eccentricity, but a rather promising move. The question how metaphors work – how they succeed in referring to something which might have been referred to by a κύριον ὄνομα, while actually using words that refer, if at all, to something quite different – is of course contentious to this day. So long as we have only words, on the one hand, and on the other the things picked out by them and thereby conjured up in thought, the problem seems likely to remain not only contentious but insoluble. And even supposing that it could be solved, there will still be the question how a metaphor succeeds in presenting the thing referred to in a light significantly different from that in which it is seen when the κύριον ὄνομα is used – and hence how metaphor can be a useful weapon in the armoury of the poet or the psychological manipulator. The Aristotelian approach, which seems to treat κύρια ὀνόματα, metaphorical expressions, foreign borrowings, dialect forms, extended or modified verbal expressions, and so on, all in the same way, that is, as lexically different but otherwise equivalent ways of referring to the same thing, appears to have no chance of even addressing this issue. There seems to be a good deal of mileage in the suggestion that however metaphorical reference is to be understood, the metaphor does its work by presenting an action or object to our minds through the filter of evaluative conceptions, with which the literal meaning of the metaphorical expression is associated. In that case a metaphor is not primarily a kind of *expression*, but precisely a kind of *conception*, one in which our notion of some thing is hung about with affective loadings that belong properly to our conceptions of other things.

But this is tricky territory; and I do not want to saddle myself with the improbable task of showing that Aristides Quintilianus, of all people, has found the magic key to all its secrets. Far from it. I mean only that his move is potentially a fruitful one, and one that few Greek theorists seem to have tried to explore. And this brings me to my final point. It seems almost inconceivable that Aristides was himself the Onlie Begetter of this radical shift in the structure of literary analysis, deploying in an entirely novel way ideas developed by the Stoics for different purposes and in different contexts of enquiry. Little in Aristides is in this sense original. He is an unashamed eclectic, fitfully inspired in the organization of his borrowings, very rarely a source of genuine intel-

¹⁷ Aristides seems to have been a voracious reader, and to have absorbed (or partly absorbed) ideas from sources of many kinds. He compounds them in ways that do not always make consistent sense, and which certainly cannot always be understood as expressing the views of any particular 'school'. I do not claim that his treatment of metaphor is either fully consistent (let alone fully adequate) or consistently Stoic in its inspiration; traces of Platonism and Aristotelianism, among other things, are not hard to find. What I am suggesting is that we can identify one significant, continuing thread in his treatment as conceptually and terminologically derived from the Stoic repertoire; and that within this Stoicizing material is embedded an approach to the subject that differs in very significant ways from all others that have survived from antiquity.

lectual novelty. It is overwhelmingly likely that he found literary figures treated in this way and in these terms in some earlier authority, whose analyses he took over and adapted to his own themes; and there is every reason to believe that the authority was not merely conversant with Stoic terminology but thoroughly committed to central tenets of peculiarly Stoic doctrine. As far as I have been able to discover, we have no direct clue to the identity of the subtle and original Stoic theorist whose existence I am postulating (though if I had to put my money anywhere, I would be inclined to have a little flutter on Diogenes of Babylon). Nor can I explain why these ideas, wherever they came from, seem never to have reached the mainstream of Greek literary discussion, in so far as we have evidence of its nature and contents. What I believe I have shown, however, is that we can add with some confidence one more small but intriguing item to our body of knowledge about the Stoics. Apart from its intrinsic interest, it is further evidence, if such were needed, of the thoroughly systematic nature of their thought, suggesting that their reflections on literary techniques were closely integrated with their semantics, and so also with their metaphysics and psychology. If we cannot assign these ideas an author or a date, that only puts them in the same situation as very many other indisputably Stoic doctrines.¹⁸

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

ANDREW BARKER

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